**Ancient Greek Economy** (**from kidipede.com)**

http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/economy/hellenistic.htm

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**Directions:**

1. **Read this article twice. Once, to get a sense or feel for it, and a second time with a highlighter. [You should copy this to your computer; rename it; and do highlighting on the computer; then copy it to your wiki.]**
2. **Highlight only information that helps you answer the following questions:**
   * **How did the Ancient Greeks adapt to the land to**

**survive?**

* + **What jobs did they have?**
  + **How did the land and climate encourage the way that the**
  + **Greeks made a living?**

1. **Caution: Read twice so that you do not underline too much.**

The Greeks did not have the same idea of an economy that we have. The word "economy" is Greek, but to the Greeks it meant something like "rules of a household" (the "eco" part of economy is from the Greek word for house, "oikos", and the "nomy" part is from their word for law).

**Because they did not think about the economy as a whole, it is hard to talk of a government economic policy. But even without any policy, people do still make things, use things, buy things, and sell things, and that is what an economy is.**

**Even as far back as the Stone Age, many Greeks were sailors, and sailed all over the Eastern Mediterranean. Like many other sailors in other places and times, the Greek sailors seem to have found a lot of different ways to make their living from sailing. Some of them were** [**fishermen**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/economy/fishing.htm)**, and ate some** [**fish**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/environment/index.htm) **and sold some in markets. Other Greeks were traders, who bought things at one port and sold them at another port, and made some profit along the way. Other Greeks were soldiers for their** [**city-state**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/government/polis.htm)**, who conquered other cities and forced them to pay tribute. Many Greek sailors worked as** [**mercenaries**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/war/mercenaries.htm)**, hiring out themselves and their ships to fight for other countries.**

**Finally, other Greeks were pirates, who simply raided wherever they could and took whatever they could get. In real life, people probably didn't fit so neatly into any of these categories. Pirates sometimes traded, and sometimes fished, and sometimes hired themselves out as mercenaries. Traders were not above doing a little raiding if they got the chance. For soldiers, the difference between fighting and raiding is not always very clear.**

**The** [**climate and soil**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/environment/index.htm) **of Greece is not very good for growing things, and as the population of Greece began to grow in the** [**Bronze Age**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/earlybronze.htm)**, there soon got to be more people than the Greeks could easily feed with** [**farming**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/economy/farming/index.htm) **and** [**sheep-herding**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/economy/sheep.htm) **and** [**hunting**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/economy/hunting.htm) **and** [**gathering**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/economy/gathering.htm)**. This forced Greek people to rely more and more on** [**sailing**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/science/sailing/boats.htm) **and the activities that went with sailing:** [**fishing**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/economy/fishing.htm)**, fighting, and trading.**

**During the political collapse of the** [**Greek Dark Ages**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/darkages.htm) **(about 1200-1000** [**BC**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/bc.htm)**), many Greek people did not have** [**children**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/india/people/index.htm)**, or left for other countries, and there weren't so many people living in Greece anymore. With more room for each person, Greek people began to raise** [**cattle**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/economy/cattle.htm) **instead of** [**sheep**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/economy/sheep.htm)**, and they did less trading and fishing.**

**After the Greek Dark Ages, the population increased again, and people went back to raising sheep rather than cattle, and they began to trade and fish and fight again. Because they were** [**mercenary soldiers**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/war/mercenaries.htm)**, by the** [**Archaic period**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/archaic.htm) **Greek men learned about minting** [**coins**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/economy/coins.htm) **from the** [**Lydians**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/economy/ironage.htm) **they fought for in** [**West Asia**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/index.htm)**, and soon each Greek** [**city-state**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/government/polis.htm) **was minting its own** [**coins**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/economy/coins.htm)**. Greek traders began to use these coins as they traded with the** [**Etruscans**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/romans/history/etruscans.htm)**, the** [**Phoenicians**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/history/phoenicians.htm)**, and the** [**Egyptians**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/egypt/history/persians.htm)**. As the Mediterranean region recovered from the** [**Dark Ages**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/economy/darkage.htm)**, the Greeks and the** [**Phoenicians**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/economy/ironage.htm) **sent out many groups of settlers to colonize (conquer and take over) southern Italy, southern France, Spain, and** [**northern Africa**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/africa/history/carthage.htm)**.**

**In the** [**Classical period**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/classical.htm)**, about 500-400** [**BC**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/bc.htm)**, the population of Greece got even bigger than it had been in the** [**Archaic period**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/economy/archaic.htm)**, and trade and fighting were even more necessary to the Greek economy. Greek** [**mercenary soldiers**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/war/mercenaries.htm) **fought for the** [**Egyptians**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/war/mercenaries.htm)**, who were trying to get free of the** [**Persians**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/history/persians.htm)**, and they also fought for the** [**Persians**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/history/persians.htm)**.**

**Because** [**mainland Greece**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/environment/index.htm) **could not produce enough** [**wheat**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/food/wheat.htm) **to feed the people of Greece, Greek traders bought a lot of wheat from the area around the Black Sea, and also from Sicily, southern Italy, and southern France. In exchange, the traders sold** [**wine**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/food/wine.htm) **and** [**olive oil**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/food/oil.htm) **and fancy** [**pottery vases**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/art/pottery/redfigure.htm)**.**

**During the** [**Peloponnesian War**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/peloponnesian.htm)**, beginning in 441 BC, though, the Greeks were all busy fighting each other, and the economy suffered. Many people went hungry, and all Greeks became much poorer than they had been before.**

**After the** [**Peloponnesian War**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/peloponnesian.htm) **was over in 404** [**BC**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/bc.htm)**, everyone in Greece was poorer than before, and many men who had been soldiers were out of work. A lot of them became** [**mercenary soldiers**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/war/mercenaries.htm) **for** [**Persia**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/history/persians.htm)**. We hear about it from a Greek general named** [**Xenophon**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/literature/xenophon.htm)**, who wrote about fighting for Persia.**

**When** [**Alexander**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/hellenistic.htm) **conquered Greece, and then all of** [**West Asia**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/history/persians.htm) **in the 330's and 320's BC, the Greek economy picked up again. Greek traders were able to travel all over West Asia, all the way to** [**India**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/india/history/mauryan.htm)**, selling their** [**wine**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/food/wine.htm) **and** [**olive oil**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/food/oil.htm)**, and buying all kinds of things. The** [**Hellenistic period**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/hellenistic.htm) **was a good time for the Greeks - -until they were conquered by the** [**Romans**](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/history/roman.htm) **in the**

**100’s BC.**

Summary: a long time ago, the Greeks had some type of economy. In Greek it means something like “rules of the household”. Without a policy, people would still make things, buy things and even use things. But this is all what an economy is. Even in the Stone Age people like the Greeks were sailors and went all over the Eastern Mediterranean. Some fished to eat and some fished to sell in markets. Some soldiers for their city states who conquered other places still forced them to pay tribute. Some Greek sailors were things like merchants or even still fighting for their place. Some sailors were even pirates and raided as much as they could wherever and whenever they could. Soon the population started to grow so the Greeks had more people to feed and they had to use more animals to feed the people. Some people had to rely on fishing, pirating and the other activities going on. Around 1200-1000 BC the Dark Ages started. Many people couldn’t have children and even had to move to other countries for protection and safety. After the Dark Ages, the population started to grow again. the people went back to relying on animals and on other activities going on.